

iVIEW

EDITOR'S PAGE

The Year That Was: Looking Back With Pride and a Time to Take Stock

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Very early, I knew that the only object in life was to grow.

Margaret Fuller (1)

The journal *JACC: Cardiovascular Imaging*, or *iJACC* as we call it with love, is 1 year old. We felt that the birthday issue was a good time to take the traditional look at how the toddler was progressing. With tremendous support from the American College of Cardiology, the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* (*JACC*), and our readership, we happily report that our growth curve has been very impressive and in fact, remarkably better than our initial projections. We have had overwhelming interest from both the authors and the readership. In the past year, we have received over 600 submissions. Of these, 50% were submitted from outside the U.S. from over 30 countries. The acceptance rate for original research manuscripts was 10%. We believe that while this attests to the exacting scientific standards of our review process, it also left us with a lingering feeling that many highly meritorious papers were not finding a home in *iJACC*. It became clear that 6 issues a year did not do justice to such a vast and diverse field of imaging and that it had become necessary to increase the frequency of publication to once every month. We are happy to report that even after going monthly (starting with the current January 2009 issue) the number of pages in each issue will remain the same as in 2008. Subscribed readership interest has also been vigorous as each issue of *iJACC* reaches over 12,000 subscribers, a number that has been growing each month.

The Editorial Process

Approximately 10% of our manuscripts have come from the parent *JACC* and the rest were received directly through the *iJACC* online submission site. Manuscripts received through the online submission site were processed by an Associate Editor who sent out the papers for review as needed. Most papers received 2 reviews; rarely, a third one was sought. The wide expertise within the Editorial Board, spread across 5 imaging subspecialties and across 3 continents, nearly always allowed us to rapidly reach a decision in case of reviewer disagreement without sending it out for additional reviews. Our average time for first decision since submission was 24 days and we have made it a priority to bring it down to <3 weeks in the ensuing year. Manuscripts from the parent *JACC* came with a provisional acceptance based on a thorough *JACC* review and discussion in their Editorial Board meeting. These manuscripts were thought to be highly meritorious but too narrow in scope for *JACC*, or not achieving adequate priority level due to page limitations; these manuscripts were passed on to *iJACC* with reviews if the author agreed to the transfer. The *iJACC* Editors then performed an expedited in-house review of the revised paper and offered rapid acceptance decisions. Very rarely, the manuscripts were sent out for a focused review when there was a particular question that needed additional reviewer input. This entire process was streamlined and appreciably accelerated the processing and decision making for authors anxious to see their original research in print quickly.

The Review Process

This has been the cornerstone of *iJACC* and we believe this has contributed to our success. Unlike

From the *University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and the †University of California-Irvine, Irvine, California.

most journals with editorial concentration in 1 university or geographic location, we invited some of the absolutely best imaging experts in the field regardless of where they resided. Finding outstanding associate editors necessitated involvement of experts spread over multiple continents and different time zones. Thus, our weekly Editorial Board meetings, held each Thursday afternoon, woke up 1 Associate Editor uncomfortably early in the morning, and prevented another from going to sleep until awfully late. *iJACC* has indeed been fortunate to have such a degree of cooperation and effort from our Associate Editors. Another unique feature of our process has been the intense involvement of our Associate Editors in improving the quality of some provisionally accepted papers. Editors have personally interacted with authors to help them present their papers in the best possible manner. A personalized letter of acceptance or regret was generated by Friday, or Monday at the latest. The individualized regret letter identified exact reasons for declining the manuscript and, often, made suggestions for improvement. Feedback to the Editors has revealed that authors appreciated our efforts to help in possibly improving their paper even if it was destined to find a home elsewhere. The average time for response from reviewers was 14 days and we are thankful for their promptness.

The “i” Features

Some of the features introduced last year were very rewarding and were worth all the hard work, including the effort of negotiating with the lawyers for Apple, Inc. to clear the prefix “i” (e.g., iPIX, iREVIEWS, and so on) for use in *iJACC*. While original research has been a highly viewed/downloaded section, others including iNEWS (News and Views) and iVIEW (Editor's Page) generated frequent web visits. As of October 2008, *iJACC* has been accessed over 160,000 times online on both the ScienceDirect and CardioSource platforms. The comprehensive multiauthor iREVIEW format was viewed very favorably over traditional formats; unfortunately, the time and effort needed to generate such a massive undertaking limited us from providing more frequent reviews. We expect to publish at least 4 such pieces in the coming year.

The Challenges

As can be expected with any new undertaking, we also experienced challenges in the first year. It would be an exercise in narcissism if we did not identify these issues and our responses to them. We had to design a thoughtful process of referrals from *JACC*—keeping in mind author confidentiality issues, turnaround time, and avoiding redundancy in review. Dr. Anthony N. DeMaria, the Editor-in-Chief of parent *JACC*, was and continues to be a great source of support and encouragement for *iJACC*. In addition, our Associate Editors had to agree to a quick overnight triage of the referrals and all rearranged their busy schedules to accommodate this. Thus, we were successful in channeling only those submissions that had the highest priority to *iJACC*. A second issue that still remains only partly resolved was how to handle submissions that do not completely fit into pre-defined categories in *iJACC*. This becomes a pressing issue given the rather loose and evolving scope of a new multidisciplinary imaging journal. An example might be highly technical but unsolicited reviews or case reports masquerading as interesting images. We recognized that some of this was surely a lack of clarity in the Instructions for Authors and we have been working to rectify this. Another issue was the transition to a monthly schedule. It took thoughtful involvement and generosity of many individuals and entities to plan 12 issues for 2009 while keeping the same number of pages per issue. The review process, while in line with other similar publications, needed to be more agile and responsive and we are working aggressively to minimize turnaround time. We are planning some innovative ways for achieving prompter handling in 2009 and the monthly format will result in a rapid publication of important submitted research work.

The Medical Indexing and Impact Factor

We were in line for PubMed processing in October 2008, which was delayed due to many other journals submitted for review before us. We hope to be reviewed by the National Library of Medicine in February 2009 and we are very confident about a successful outcome; the PubMed listing will be retroactive to the start of the publication (i.e., January 2008). Similarly, *iJACC* is being

processed for ISI/Science Citation Index; the ISI needs a minimum of a 3-year continuous publication record to generate the citation impact factor.

It has been a very rewarding first year. We look forward to continuing our voyage with even more success. We thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for finding time to accompany us on this journey. We have had an excellent first year, but the best years are yet in front of us. As Frank Si-

natra would have said—“*still it's a real good bet, the best is yet to come (2)*”.

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